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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004332

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOFS](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EDELMAN MEETS WITH
IRAQI MINISTER OF INTERIOR

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires David M. Satterfield for reasons 1.4 (a), (b), and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman and LTG Victor Renuart, Director of Strategic Plans and Policy, called on Iraqi Minister of Interior Bayan Jabr at his office on October 18, 2005. Jabr was accompanied by GEN Babiker Shwakt, commander of the Iraqi Joint Forces (representing the Minister of Defense who was out of the country), and MG Adnan Thabit, head of the Ministry of Interior's Special Police Forces. Jabr reviewed the progress being made by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and expressed gratitude to the U.S. for its continuing assistance. He agrees with President Bush that we cannot back down and must continue to fight until the terrorists are defeated. The ISF are improving in their abilities to fight on their own and are getting an increasing amount of cooperation from civilians who are pointing them to insurgents. Edelman told Jabr that the Iraqis must continue to develop ministerial capacity and to spend sufficient amounts to support their investment in security. With regard to cross-border threats, Jabr said that Syria is the number one problem with regard to support for the insurgency and played down any negative role played by Iran. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) USDP Edelman opened the meeting explaining that he and LTG Renuart had recently assumed their positions and wanted to visit at the earliest opportunity to assess and learn first hand what is taking place in Iraq. So far they had visited Mosul, al-Kisik, and Taji to meet with ISF officers and to inspect training facilities. USDP Edelman related that he and Renuart had been impressed by what they had seen.

IRAQI CAPACITY NEEDED

13. (C) USDP Edelman stressed the need for the Iraqis to develop the ministerial capacity required to support the progress and the investments already made, noting that the Iraqis have gone from zero security forces to a combined military/police force of over 207,000, with a goal of 325,000. He emphasized that, as these forces grow, so too does the need to build the capacity to sustain them. USDP Edelman stressed they must be equipped, maintained, paid, fed, and housed in a way that will protect the investments already made and allow progress to continue. He also acknowledged that this will pose challenges for the Ministers of Interior and Defense as they will be required to negotiate with the Minister of Finance and others over the amount of funding needed. To prevail in these negotiations, the security ministries must ensure that institutions and procedures are in place to assure others that the money allocated will be well and properly spent. The U.S. is confident that this type of ministerial capacity can be built because we have helped to do so in several Eastern European countries that recently have advanced to the point that they have been allowed to join NATO. He assured Jabr that we are committed to helping the Iraqis successfully build their capacity as well.

PROGRESS ON THE SECURITY FRONT

14. (C) Jabr thanked USDP for his remarks and welcomed him to Iraq. He said he could speak for both the Ministries of Defense and Interior when he said that the Iraqis are grateful for all the training and assistance provided to them by the U.S. Thanks to this assistance, the ISF have progressed to the point where they are capable of carrying out more duties at a higher level. As an example, he noted the very successful outcome, from a security standpoint, of the recent referendum. In comparison to the January election, more people voted and acts of violence were significantly lower. The Iraqis will always remember the assistance given by the U.S.

15. (C) Jabr said that the fight in which Iraq is involved is not merely a war between Iraq and a group of individuals. Rather, it is a "world war" against the phenomenon of terrorism. If we do not work together to stop terrorism now, he warned, it will spread throughout the world. Jabr said he

agrees completely with President Bush that we must not back down in the face of terrorism and that to do so would be a serious defeat. He said that the progress Iraq is making politically -- with its election, new government, draft constitution, and referendum -- is sending an important message to the people of the region living under dictatorships: democracy is possible. "If we obtain a victory here we will help many people throughout the region to win their freedom."

16. (C) Thabit, who commands the police Commando and Public Order Brigades, reported that his forces have received excellent training and are becoming more and more successful in engagements with terrorists. He boasted that the terrorists his forces encounter no longer stand and fight but run away instead. When asked about the level of public support for the ISF, both Thabit and Babiker said that more and more civilians are coming forward to report terrorist and insurgent activities and their hiding places. In addition, insurgents who are captured are informing on their colleagues more than has been true in the past. LTG Renuart emphasized the need to have police forces that are trusted and respected by the public, as these are the security forces they see every day in their communities. The force must be composed of individuals who are representative of all communities in Iraq. Thabit replied that this is increasingly the case.

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17. (C) USDP Edelman asked Jabr about problems caused by its neighbors. Jabr replied that two kinds of interference are encountered: direct or government-supported interference and indirect interference in which individuals in a neighboring country are permitted to cause problems for Iraq. With regard to the first, Syria is the major problem, as it opens its borders to fighters from other countries and allows them to pass through to enter Iraq. He produced a handful of foreign passports he claimed were taken from foreign fighters and noted that the last stamps in all of them were entries into Syria. He also showed one that had a receipt for a one-way ticket into Syria tucked inside. With regard to "indirect" interference, he pointed to Saudi Arabia, stating that the Saudis permit their citizens to support the insurgents financially and that many of the foreign fighters who come to Iraq are Saudi. When asked about Iran, Jabr replied that it was not a problem. Only a handful of people have been arrested crossing the Iranian border to cause trouble. Jabr did, however, acknowledge that the British have informed him that they suspect many of the improvised explosive devices that have killed their soldiers and others are based on technology imported from Iran.

18. (U) This cable was cleared by USDP Edelman.
Satterfield